



# FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES

A Presentation of the Church Universal

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## FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES

This is a simple symbolic presentation of The Church Universal, which may be given by women or by a group of young people. The altar, upstage center, may be improvised for the occasion—a table or box covered with simple draperies—or it may be borrowed from the pulpit. Indeed the pageant might be very effectively given in the church itself. The scene should be lighted only by the flame upon the altar at first. The Nations should be grouped as silhouettes on the dim stage. After the Nations gather at the altar, however, the whole scene should be brightly lighted.

The music is important. The hymns should be sung clearly and with feeling in chorus or as solos. All movement should be purposeful, rhythmical, timed to the music. The director should watch the stage picture for graceful and effective grouping of the characters at all times.

The setting and costumes may, of course, be elaborated for beautiful effects under changing lights. However, the pageant will be most appealing and significant if given with extreme simplicity—with careful attention to details.

### The Characters

#### THE CHURCH

a stately woman whose dignity and magnetism command attention. Her movements are few but significant—every gesture is full of meaning. She may be dressed in purple drapery with touches of gold—or in any simple costume of quiet dignity.

#### THE MESSENGERS

four young women with clear voices—and smiling lips. These should be dressed in white—draperies of cheese-cloth (or sheets)—or in any simple white dress.

#### THE NATIONS

the four nations—Korea, Japan, Brazil, and Mexico—are to be represented. There may be one person for each nation, or a group of people. The costumes may be colorful national dress, or the nationality may be denoted by the flags of these countries—or simpler still—by a banner or placard on which is printed the name of the nation.

## PRELUDE:

"We've a Story to Tell to the Nations" (The METHODIST HYMNAL, No. 501). *This should be played—or sung—softly off-stage.*

*The stage is darkened. There is an altar upstage on which a flame burns. This is the sole light by which we see The Nations forming, a statuesque group near the front of the stage, and—more clearly—the four Messengers gathered at the altar. The Church, a stately figure clothed in purple robes, holds her position at the altar through this scene. We hear the chanted dialogue between The Nations and The Church, The Messengers joining in the answers of The Church.*

## THE NATIONS:

Christians, tell us of the night,  
What it signs of promise are.

## CHURCH and MESSENGERS:

Nation, o'er yon mountain's height  
See that glory-beaming star!

## THE NATIONS:

Christians, does its beauteous ray  
Aught of joy or hope foretell?

## CHURCH and MESSENGERS:

Nations, yes; it brings the day,  
Promised day of Israel.

## THE NATIONS:

Christians, tell us of the night;  
Higher yet that star ascends.

## CHURCH and MESSENGERS:

Nations, blessedness and light,  
Peace and truth, its course portends.

## NATIONS:

Christians, will its beams alone  
Gild the spot that gave them birth?

## CHURCH and MESSENGERS:

Nations, ages are its own;  
See, it bursts o'er all the earth!

After the chant has died into silence, the Church speaks.  
The Messengers and Nations respond, *in unison.*

## THE CHURCH:

A faint, far light  
Shines in the East.  
God, who commands the light  
To shine out of the darkness,  
Sheds now his light upon our hearts.

**THE MESSENGERS:**

We turn our faces  
Unto the light.

**THE NATIONS:**

O hear us!  
Send out the light  
And the truth  
To us who seek,  
Calling from afar.  
Shed upon our shadows  
The light of His countenance.

**THE CHURCH:**

*(To the Messengers)*  
Heed the call.  
Declare His glory  
Unto these seekers.  
Shed His light upon all nations  
Even unto the farthest corner  
Of the earth.

**THE NATIONS:**

Be thou our guide,  
For with thee is light,  
And in thy light  
Shall we be led.

**THE MESSENGERS:**

*(Going forward to the Nations)*

Come,  
Would you find life  
And peace  
And light?  
Then come, O Nations!  
The Church says Come.

We bring to you  
The welcome of The Church.  
We bring to you  
A shining gift—  
A challenge—and a task.

**THE NATIONS:**

We come!  
We come unto the Church.  
We step into the light,  
Accept the challenge,  
And take up the task.  
*The Nations advance to the altar with The Mes-  
sengers. A bright light illumines the whole stage.*

## THE CHURCH:

Arise, shine;  
For the light is come  
And the glory of the Lord  
Is risen upon you.

*As they stand thus they join in singing* LET THERE BE

LIGHT (The METHODIST HYMNAL, No. 477).

Thou, whose almighty word  
Chaos and darkness heard,  
And took their flight;  
Hear us, we humbly pray,  
And where the gospel's day  
Sheds not its glorious ray,  
Let there be light!

Thou who didst come to bring  
On Thy redeeming wing,  
Healing and sight,  
Health to the sick in mind,  
Sight to the inly blind:  
O now, to all mankind,  
Let there be light!

Holy and blessed Three,  
Glorious Trinity,  
Grace, Love, and Might!  
Boundless as ocean's tide  
Rolling in fullest pride,  
Through the world far and wide,  
Let there be light!

During the singing of this hymn The Church holds her position back of the altar. The Messengers gather before the altar, and The Nations form an outer half circle about The Messengers. As the music dies, The Nations speak in unison.

## THE NATIONS:

We give thanks to God our Father  
For your faith,  
For the faith of your Messengers,  
For the shedding of the light upon our darkness—  
For the lifting of our hearts  
Into the Light of the World

## MESSENGERS:

(chanting)

Glory be to the Father,  
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

THE CHURCH:

Today our Mesengers  
Through the wide world  
Bear testimony to the living faith,  
Once given to the saints—  
Gladly received into the hearts  
Of Wesley and his brothers—  
Salvation, light, and life  
Of many thousands  
Everywhere.

MESENTERS

(chanting)

As it was in the beginning,  
Is now, and ever shall be,  
World without end.

AMEN . . . AMEN.

THE CHURCH

And now, my daughters,  
God grants to us this day  
That the autonomy  
Of the Korean Church  
May be proclaimed.

*Korea steps forth to receive the right hand of fellowship from the Church and holds this position before the altar as The Nations speak in unison.*

THE NATIONS

Rejoice with us  
For this is your work in the Lord.

THE CHURCH

In joy and fellowship  
We now proclaim  
Autonomy of the Church of Mexico.

*Mexico steps forward to receive the right hand of fellowship.*

THE NATIONS

Rejoice with us  
For this is your work in the Lord.

THE CHURCH

And of Brazil.  
*Brazil is received by The Church.*

THE NATIONS

Rejoice with us  
For this is your work in the Lord.

## THE CHURCH

And of Japan.

*Japan steps forward as the others.*

## THE CHURCH

Rejoice with us

For this is your work in the Lord.

## THE CHURCH

May God grant you victory—

Great victory—

Against sin

And worldliness;

Against darkness

And superstition;

Against ignorance and disease

And every evil.

May God our Father

Open wide the door

That you may shed upon the world

The light of Jesus Christ

Which you hold in your hearts.

## THE NATIONS

Be near to us in love,

And pray for us.

## THE CHURCH

*(in benediction with arms uplifted)*

And may the Father of Lights

Hallow your hearts and ours.

May our Great Father bind our hearts together

In light and love

And one day in His presence

May we kneel to praise Him—

Together.

## THE MESSENGERS

*(softly singing)*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

AMEN. AMEN.

*With bowed heads the group remains silent. They slowly clasp hands to form a circle about the altar as the women of the Society sing together "In Christ There Is No East or West" (The METHODIST HYMNAL, No. 50).*

